

# Giving Away Joy Helps a Veteran-Owned Business in Texas

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VFW Post 8541 in San Antonio, Texas, wanted a way to help lessen the impact of the COVID-19 crisis in their community.

The Post didn't have to look very far. San Antonio Healthy Vending, a local business owned by Special Forces veteran Ruben Ayala, was hit hard by the shutdown. Most of his clientele closed their doors, leaving Ayala with a significant amount of perishable food and no way to offset the cost.

"Post 8541, in conjunction with several other organizations, saw this as a call to action," said Post Commander William Smith.

"Donations were made to purchase the excess inventory, and the food was transitioned to our Post. With the help of members from all participating organizations, we built snack packs for a middle school."

At the end of April, a team of volunteers met at the school to bring some joy to students in need. The principal had coordinated a time for students to turn in homework for the month and gift bags were given out as the kids dropped off their packets.

"The reaction from the students, who expected to receive more homework but were instead handed some of their favorite snacks, was priceless," Smith said.

Smith feels that everyone coming together to make a difficult time a little easier exemplifies the military motto "One Team, One Fight."

"We are all in this together, and our service to the community is, and will remain, a staple

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function of our Post,” said Smith.

“Supporting and providing opportunities for future generations of soldiers is as important to us as assisting those who have already served.”